

THE
S E R M O N
PREACHED
AT THE CONSECRATION
OF
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL,
FREDERICTON, N. B.,
AUGUST 31, 1853;

BY
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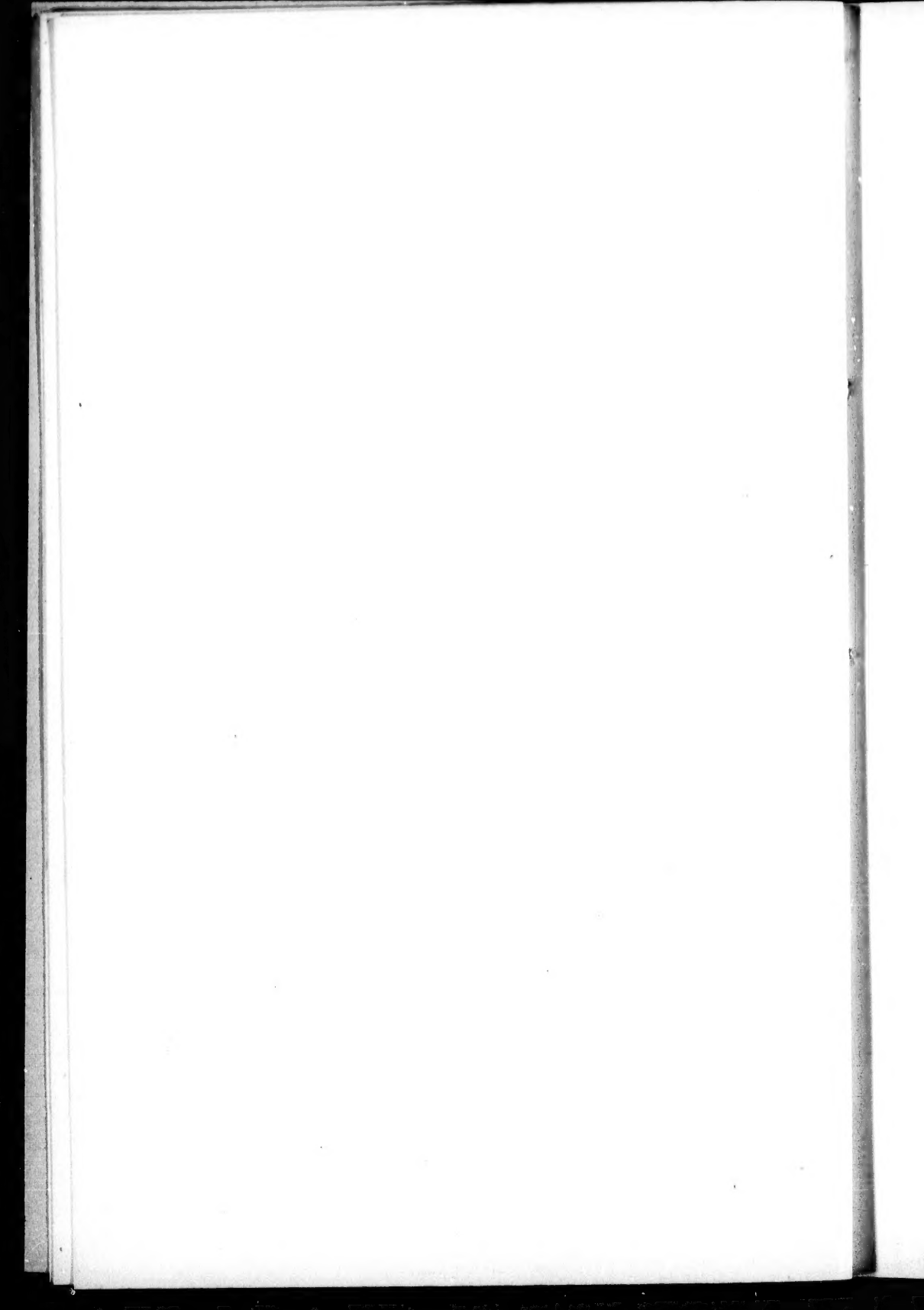
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TO
THE BISHOP, CLERGY, AND LAITY
OF
THE DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON,
THIS EDITION OF
THE SERMON PREACHED AT THE CONSECRATION OF THEIR
CATHEDRAL CHURCH,
IS RESPECTFULLY PRESENTED
BY
THE PARISH OF THE ADVENT,
AS AN HUMBLE OFFERING ON OCCASION OF THE CONSECRATION, AND AS A
TOKEN OF THE LOVE AND FELLOWSHIP IN WHICH THEY ARE ONE
WITH THEM IN THE COMMUNION OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, WHO HAST BUILT THY CHURCH UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE HEAD CORNER-STONE; GRANT US SO TO BE JOINED TOGETHER IN UNITY OF SPIRIT BY THEIR DOCTRINE, THAT WE MAY BE MADE AN HOLY TEMPLE ACCEPTABLE UNTO THEE; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.



S E R M O N .

“FOR MY BRETHREN AND COMPANIONS’ SAKES, I WILL NOW SAY, PEACE BE WITHIN THEE.” — Psalm cxxii. 8.

DAVID here declares his desire for the prosperity of Jerusalem, because it was the home of his kindred and his friends. But in the next verse, (which I would therefore incorporate as a part of my text,) he adds another argument of a still higher character: “BECAUSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OUR GOD, I WILL SEEK THY GOOD.” The sacred association hallowed the place. Jerusalem was linked in his affections with the worship which had descended from distant generations, and which had now found a home in his own royal abode. For, though he was not permitted to build a house to the Lord his God, yet there, upon Mount Zion, the

ark rested, a tabernacle was pitched for it, and the ancient worship was revived with a splendor and dignity which it had never before equalled. David himself added to its songs of praise. It awoke his highest aspirations. It inspired his sacred lays. Jerusalem itself was loved for its sake; and the holy emotions which clustered around it, extended themselves, and embraced the Sacred City and all who dwelt within its walls.

There is something like this here. We are fellow-countrymen, all, descended from the same stock, looking back to the same ancestry, nurtured by the same literature, proud of the same history. We are fellow-countrymen, all. Our mother-land is the same, whether we ourselves came from it, having been nursed upon its bosom, or our fathers came hither a few centuries back. The links that connect us with the past, run into one chain. The streams of our lives flow from one fountain-head. England, Old England, is our common mother. There the bones of our ancestors moulder together beneath the same clods. The memorials of our race hang together over the same shrines. Our names commingle, and run back to the same fathers and mothers. The same blood flows in our veins.

Surely there is here a tie, a bond of union, which every heart before me must deeply feel. But there is another and a holier still. We are descended from the same Mother in the faith. The same Creed is breathed from our lips. The same prayers ascend from our altars. Along the line of our sacred worship we trace our *spiritual* ancestry back to the same dear Mother of us all, the good old Church of England.

While, therefore, I, and such as I, come from another land, from under another government, and meet you here, in holy greeting, to-day, and while we bear with us the thought that we are Englishmen, all, in our ancient homes and our ancient descent, we bear with us also another thought, of far more thrilling import, which, on such a day as this, may well fill our hearts, and become the ruling spirit of the occasion. It is the thought that you are one with us *in the faith*; that no national jealousies or national animosities can divide us here; that we have one *spiritual* genealogy, the remembrance of which has never been lost amidst scenes of strife and bloodshed; that it is one unsullied, unbroken chain of holy

succession from the Martyrs and the Bishops of the early Church of England; that we look back to the same glorious Reformation as the epoch of our common deliverance from the same corruptions of faith and worship, and farther back to the same origin of our Churches in times where the mists of antiquity obscure the record of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon our fathers.

We are Englishmen, all, far more in our faith and worship, than in our secular ancestry. It is this sacred tie, originated in heaven, which binds us most closely together; and while we speak "Peace" to you as "brethren and companions," because we spring from the same stock, and claim the same progenitors, with a far deeper interest do we address you, and address the ancient land of our fathers, as partakers in, and the home of our common faith: "For the sake of *the House of the Lord our God* among you, we will seek your good."

For one, I have come to this place and to this event, with the earnest and controlling desire that I might do something to strengthen the bonds of union between the Churches of England and America. I have come with the hope that the

presence here of even one Bishop of the American Church might have a happy influence in extending farther that catholic intercourse which has been so happily begun by my brethren in the Episcopate who visited England during the last year. I do not come with official authority to represent the Church which I have the honor to serve. But I do come with the same spirit which prompted our Bishops to send their delegates to the jubilee of the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; and the occasion, it seems to me, may, in some humble degree, be productive of the same beneficent results.

I could have wished that other members of our Episcopal body had found it in their power to be here. Who of us would not have rejoiced to see them standing side by side with the respected Prelates* of the Colonial Church whose presence adds associations of peculiar interest to the auspicious services of the day? Others, I know, had it in their hearts to be here. But the duty which has

* The Bishops of Quebec and Toronto, both of them time-honored laborers in the service of the Colonial Church, and the former once Rector of Fredericton.

detained them, has left me, alone of all their number, free to come and express, in any wise, the greetings of the Church in the United States. I bring them to you cordially and heartily; for I am well assured that I do not misinterpret the general feeling of our Church when I say, that she rejoices in your prosperity, and that she hails the rising of another tower of strength, in the erection of this Cathedral, with unfeigned gratitude and hope.

And now let us turn to thoughts more directly appropriate to the occasion, — the Consecration of a House of God to the sacred uses for which it is designed. Let our hearts linger about the scene which opens upon us here, — a band of brothers, met to witness, and to participate in, the setting apart of this sacred abode to the worship and service of the Triune Deity, for ever. Let us rise, if we may, to a just contemplation of the greatness of the event.

What is a Consecration? What does it signify? It signifies the setting apart or devoting to God, — it may be of a Church, it may be of some minor article of property, it may be of a child, as in Holy

Baptism, it may be of a man, as in the conferring of Holy Orders. Here, and to-day, it is the Consecration *of a Church*. This noble building has been erected by human instruments, with human means. Man's work is done upon it, or so far finished that the edifice may be regarded as completed. It is now given to God, a holocaust, an entire offering to His service. Henceforth it is His, and His only. It cannot be taken away from Him. It cannot be turned to any secular purpose. It is His, alone, and for ever. It is no more man's, excepting to guard and keep it for God. Man can have no control over it, excepting as God's steward, to retain it for God's service, and to see to it that it remains for ever devoted to His glory. Whoever lays upon it the hand of violence, whoever turns it to any secular use, at any time, through all the ages to come, is guilty of sacrilege; he steals from God;—and God is His own avenger.

For what purpose is this Church consecrated? It is consecrated to the worship of God, and to all the uses and services of Religion; for Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, for Catechising and

Confirmation, for Holy Matrimony and Solemn Burial, for the Reading and Preaching of God's Word, and particularly, because most commonly, for the Oblation of Prayer and Praise, of Confession, of Thanksgiving, and of Supplication. For whatever public use a ministry is designed, to that use is this House of God for ever set apart. Here, through all ages, shall ascend the petitions of humble worshippers. Hither shall broken hearts be brought, and here shall they pour out their griefs before God, the Father of us all. Here shall the penitent hear the soothing sounds which pronounce his pardon in the Absolution. Here shall the firm believer, with mien erect, declare his faith in the adorable Trinity. Here shall the needy suppliant present his wants to the bounteous Giver of every good gift. These walls shall be vocal with the songs of Praise; and the gushing tide of Thanksgiving shall swell backward to its Source, the Fountain of all mercies. Hither shall the mother bring her infant, with the deep yearnings of a mother's love, and here shall she consecrate it to her God in the regenerating waters of the Font. Here shall the faithful Pastor rightly divide the

word of truth. Here shall the Sacrament of the Eucharist raise its notes of penitence, present its oblation of thanksgiving, and confer upon mortals a "banquet of most heavenly food." Here shall Catechumens kneel to receive the sealing of the Holy Ghost in the sacred Ordinance of Confirmation. Here shall vows be pledged, and troth plighted, and the nuptial tie be blessed by God's Priest, in God's Name. Hither, at the last, when the labors of earth are done, shall men bring their dead, and here with holy prayer and requiem shall they consign them to their mother earth. Here shall the poor and rich meet together, before Him who is the Maker of them all. Here shall they gain strength for their mortal pilgrimage, be reminded of their sins and short-comings, and be stimulated to a more faithful service. Here shall the sons and daughters of want be fed and clothed from the Offerings of God's people; and hence shall go forth faithful men, into the abodes of poverty and disease, carrying the ministrations of the Gospel, the voice of warning, the consolations of hope, the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ for the sick. Here shall children be trained

for Heaven under the skilful hand of the Catechist, the Lambs and the Sheep of Christ's flock alike fed, and old and young, rich and poor, one with another, conducted along the narrow way that leadeth to everlasting life. Such is this House of God. Such are its uses. Such is the sublime purpose to which we now consecrate it.

But it is to a more restricted use than might possibly be implied in such general terms as these, that it is now devoted. It is to the use of all the means of grace, and to the administration of the same, *according to the laws and usages of the United Church of England and Ireland*. Only that which she has sanctioned, can be here adopted. Only the Faith which she professes, can be here preached. Only the Sacraments which she acknowledges, can be here ministered. And it is hardly of less importance to declare that all these things should be administered in their fulness. It is thus alone that the uses of this sacred House can come up to the requisitions of its Consecration. If she has provided that daily prayer be said in her Churches, the act of Consecration implies that to that also this holy place is devoted. If she has

recognized the commemoration of Saints and Angels in her liturgical arrangement, and has made provision for it, the consecration of a Church to the worship and service of God *according to her order and standard*, involves its dedication to that purpose also. If she has appointed the Athanasian Creed to be read on certain Festivals, or the Communion at the opening of Lent, or whatever else is provided in her Book of Common Prayer, and there set forth for use, to those things and to that use is this Church now consecrated, — if so be that it is consecrated to the worship and service of Almighty God *according to the laws and usages of the United Church of England and Ireland*. As you cannot justly exceed, so, if there be a possibility of performance, you cannot safely fall below the mark of her appointment. She is yours, Brethren, with the fulness of her rich provision for you, with her abundant means of grace, which lack not, and have nothing over. If she has supplied nothing uselessly, nothing superfluously, it is not well for you to omit what she has prescribed. There is naught but nutritive and healthful food in all that she has provided. Take it all, for it is all your own. Re-

ceive it all, as from a mother's hand, and it shall nourish you unto everlasting life.

But I must not forget that this Church has a peculiar use and purpose in being the Cathedral Church of the Diocese. It is the seat of your Bishop, the Centre of your ecclesiastical unity, the source whence the most potent influences will extend themselves, like concentric circles on a lake, throughout your Province. It is this which gives the day its most notable importance, which has brought us, members of the same Christian household, from near and from afar, to this solemn, yet joyous assembly. It is a great event, — which will speak to generations yet unborn, which every Churchman in this Diocese will take note of, which will attract attention throughout our Communion spread far and wide over this vast continent, which will be heard of in the islands of the sea, in distant India, in the homes and by the firesides of England, and throughout the illimitable reach of those unequalled dominions on which the sun never goes down. It is a voice for all nations and for all ages that we utter here to-day.

But that to which I would especially ask your at-

tention, in connection with this almost overpowering thought, is the character of this edifice among yourselves. It is like no other Church that rises on your soil. It is not simply a Parish Church, although it provides abundantly for the spiritual wants of those immediately around it. It is not local, in its character, or its influence. It is your Diocesan Church. It represents the oneness of your faith, of your worship, and of your Christian fellowship. In olden times, before our modern parochial system was extant, when the Bishop's See was the common habitation of the clergy, and thence they went forth to their sacred ministrations among the scattered population of the land, the Cathedral Church bore this character of a typical unity with a clearer manifestation than at present. But this essential feature and its significance are still the same; and fortunately, in your own case, the idea is strengthened and impressed by that conformity to ancient usage which has given to your Diocese the name of the Bishop's residence. It is the Diocese of Fredericton; and this is the Cathedral Church of Fredericton. It indicates what the Church itself indicates, that here is the central point of your unity.

But it is needful to add, that the Cathedral Church derives this character only from its being the seat of the Bishop. It is because your ecclesiastical unity verges towards and centres in him, that it is typified by the Church in which he personally presides. Otherwise, this would present no distinguishable difference from any parochial Church in your Diocese. The Cathedral, therefore, teaches a great, and solemn, and religious truth,—a truth which, as faithful Churchmen, you have doubtless learned before, but which is conveyed to you anew, and with a deeper impression, in all the services of to-day. It reminds you that your Bishop is your Head on earth, the Representative of Christ in the seat of the Apostles, the Centre of your visible unity. You can have no other among men, for unity cannot have two or more sources of procession. The circle cannot have two centres. So neither can church communion have two conflicting or diverse types. Your Bishop is one, even as this Church is one. Your fellowship in the Church Visible attaches itself here, to him, as the point of your common union. It is not elsewhere, throughout your Diocese. It is not elsewhere, on the face of the earth.

I had intended at this time to offer some practical suggestions respecting the effectuation of a Catholic and regulated intercommunion between the Church of England and the Church in the United States. But there remains for me space only to say, that it is of high importance that this intercommunion should speedily attain a practical and efficient character. It will not be confined, let us trust, to messages of good-will and compliments of Christian courtesy. There is needed, immediately, a system of correspondence and combined action which will have to do with the temporal and eternal interests of men. As one subject which imperatively demands our attention, I will allude to the condition of members of the Church of England who come from the old country, and from the Provinces, into the United States. I will illustrate by my own experience, premising only that I see no reason to suppose that Boston, the city in which I reside, exhibits a more melancholy picture than other large cities of the Union. During the last winter, I explored a small portion of that city, as much as I thought might be fairly included in the Parish of which I am Rector, if we

had, as we generally have not, in the United States, parochial limits. I chose the portion which lay immediately adjacent to my Parish Church. It presents, probably, neither an over-favorable, nor a too unfavorable view of results. I could have selected a much more needy portion, or one where the conclusion would have been far less startling than in the section of which I speak. It may be regarded, therefore, as presenting a fair specimen of the condition of the poorer classes of your fellow-countrymen who come to the United States,—and a great majority of those who come are of the poorer classes. I sent through this district, a Deacon, who is himself an Englishman, but has lately been admitted to Orders in the American Church. He visited every house and every family. The result was, that, in this single section, embracing probably not more than one tenth of the city of Boston, he found one hundred and seven families, comprising doubtless more than five hundred souls, who were members of the Church, most of them of the Church of England and Ireland, who were living in utter destitution of the means of grace, or were unconnected with any Parish, most of them never going

to Church, and all destitute of pastoral care, their children unbaptized and untaught, the parents in many cases alienated in their affections from the Church. This estimate does not include another portion, who, having been baptized in the Church of England, have emigrated to the United States, and, after a time, have connected themselves with some Protestant sect. These are now lost to the Church, many of them irrecoverably. Their number, judging from the frequency with which we meet them in our household visits, must be very considerable. But these aside, the hundred and seven families of which I have spoken, acknowledge themselves still as members of the Church of England. They were baptized at your Fonts. They have been taught in your schools. Many of them have received the Apostolic Benediction of the laying on of hands in your Churches. Not a few of them have been fed at your Altars. They are your brethren in the flesh, as well as your brethren in the faith, bone of your bone, your very kith and kin. And yet, (for here lies the grand cause of the evil,) they have been allowed — almost without exception — to come to the United

States, from England, from Ireland, and from the American Provinces, without so much as a commendatory Letter from their Pastors at home, without a certificate, or any other written evidence of their membership in the Church. When we receive your emigrants to Holy Communion, (for, besides such as I have described, there are others who do seek a connection with our Parishes, — in my own Parish I presume there must be a hundred such,) we are compelled, in numerous instances, to receive them without any other proof that the applicant has been baptized and confirmed than his own word for it. Surely, this most unprimitive, most unchristian state of things ought not so to be.

Our *poor* also, — the vast majority of them are of the Church of England. In my own Parish, which is largely engaged in labors among this class, probably nine tenths of our regular pensioners were baptized in the Church of England, and more than nine tenths of our charities are devoted to such. Besides this, the *occasional* applicants for aid are, with rare exceptions, Englishmen; and yet an applicant next to never has with him any

proof of his being a deserving person. His Pastor has allowed him to come to America without any credentials. He fails, perhaps, to find work. He falls into a deeper poverty. He becomes sick. He has no one to go to, to whom he can open his heart. He can show no evidence of his being an honest man. The more honest he is, the less willing he is to make his wants known, without some better proof of his good deserts than the aspect of his misery. Your best people suffer the most; and I have known them to suffer almost to starvation before they would ask relief, when a bit of paper from their old Pastors would have given them courage to make their situation known. But let me illustrate by an instance in point, which will more clearly convey, and more deeply impress, my meaning, than a whole sermon full of generalities. I have seen a woman, one of your daughters, a young mother, baptized and nurtured in the Church of England, who, with her child, was left alone, in a garret, in one of the darkest alleys in one of our vilest streets, left alone, with her child sick, her means exhausted, her time occupied with attending to her dying infant, no work to be found, even

if she had been in a condition to do it, her furniture sold, excepting the miserable bed on which the child lay, and a little table which stood by its side, while, as if all this were not enough to fill up the cup of her sorrow, her hard-hearted landlord (and yet why call him "hard-hearted," for he was a poor man and was obliged to live himself) was threatening to eject her from his premises for non-payment of rent. I found her in this condition, one bleak night in winter. She was without a fire, for she had no money wherewith to purchase fuel. Her child was lying on the bed in the agonies of death. "Oh, if he may only be christened," she said, "before he dies! I cannot bear he should die without baptism." I baptized the child; and, on inquiring into her circumstances, I found, and afterwards more fully learned, that she was of respectable parentage in her own country, that her husband was away in a foreign land, that she had shrunk from making her condition known because she had no recommendation, and that for two months she had been struggling with her evil fortune, without a word of sympathy from any Christian soul. Brethren, beloved in the Lord, these

things, I again say, ought not so to be. That young woman told me who her Pastor at home was. A single line from him would have enabled her, and would have encouraged her, on her arrival in Boston, to have become connected with some one of our Parishes. Her wants would have been relieved; her sick child would have been nursed; perhaps (for he died a few hours after his baptism) his life would have been saved; work would have been found for her; an honest livelihood would have been gained; and all this needless misery would have been spared.

I need not say, after depicting such a scene as this, (and I have only illustrated by one out of many instances of suffering, of vice, of alienation from the Church, of neglect of children, of physical and mental and spiritual degeneracy, which have come to my knowledge among English emigrants in Boston,)—I need not say that I deem it an imperative duty of our Churches to establish some system of communication by which our members, passing from one to the other, shall never need to lose the pastoral care of the Church. It is a subject which requires our immediate atten-

tion ; and I would that my voice could reach every Bishop and Pastor of our respective Churches, while I beg, in the name of needy thousands of men and women and children, for whose spiritual oversight we are responsible, for the speedy restoration among us of that primitive style of intercourse which left no sheep or lamb of Christ's fold without the Shepherd's care in a foreign land, which enabled Christians abroad, as at home, to secure fraternal sympathy, to find an Altar whence they might be fed, a Church in which they might kneel as recognized brethren, and, amidst all the vicissitudes of a sojourner's life in a strange land, behold, realized to themselves, the privileges and benefits of the Blessed Communion of Saints.

Brethren, my words draw to a close. Let us, for a moment, turn our thoughts home to ourselves, and to the duty of the hour which is passing away. If there arises in your hearts a single emotion of thankful gladness at the sight of this holy and beautiful House completed, if there springs within you a feeling of sympathetic joy in the happiness which now crowns the protracted and patient and

self-sacrificing labors of your honored Head, the Bishop of the Diocese, let that emotion of gratitude and that feeling of sympathy find their just and appropriate expression in abundant offerings of your earthly substance laid upon the Altar of your God; and let this solemn Consecration of a Temple to His service be accompanied by the renewed offering of yourselves, your souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him. The day will come when we who are now assembled here, in God's Name, to consecrate this material edifice to His honor and glory, shall be gathered into a more august assembly, in His more glorious presence, for a more sublime, a more momentous purpose. It will then be asked of us, whether we who have builded temples of wood and stone to His praise on earth, have raised the superstructure of our own hope upon the Rock of Ages. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the sure Corner-Stone, on which our choicest works must rise, based upon which alone they will surely abide. He is the Eternal Rock, upon which the Church, with her beautiful array of Sacrament, and Prayer,

and Benediction, soars towards her grand and final completion. He is the Rock, upon which our own feet must stand, while, within her safe enclosure, we feed upon the bounties of His love. On Him reposes our sublimest faith. From Him springs upward, in glowing aspiration, our exultant hope. On Him is laid the firm foundation of those deeds of charity, which, done in Him on earth, are recorded in those unerring Books out of which we shall be judged in the last day, every man according to his works.

Upon that Rock may this your goodly Temple, reared to the glory and worship of the TRIUNE God, firmly and for ever stand! And when the waves of Time, beating upon the silent shore of Eternity, shall have borne thither us who now, amidst the ocean of life, celebrate the rise of this hallowed Fane, may He who preserveth His Church in every vicissitude and circumstance of her earthly pilgrimage, keep this Beacon of truth to shed its light over the waters whereon so many voyage to life, so many, alas, to death. May that light never flicker, never fail! But, leading wanderers to the Port of peace, and warning the guilty of the hidden

rocks on which they are rushing, may it cease not to illumine and guide, until the ocean of time itself shall disappear, and there shall rise, in its stead, that new earth which will need no light of human temples to shine in it, because the Lamb of God will Himself be the Temple, Himself the Light thereof.

